DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 118 CS 211 095

AUTHOR Dooley, Mary S.
TITLE Dialogue Journals: Facilitating the Reading-Writing Connection with Native American Students.
PUB DATE Jan 87
NOTE 37p.; Requirement for a Master's degree, Northern Michigan University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS American Indian Education; *American Indians; Cultural Context; Cultural Influences; Grade 3; Primary Education; *Reading Writing Relationship; Student Attitudes; Student Writing Models; *Teacher Student Relationship; Teaching Methods; Writing Improvement; *Writing Instruction; Writing Research
IDENTIFIERS Beginning Writing; Childrens Writing; *Dialogue Journals

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the integration of early reading and writing skills, a study examined the instructional use of daily dialogue journals over a 5-month period in a class of 10 third-grade Native American students living on an Indian reservation in northern Michigan. Students were required to make an entry of at least three lines every day, all writing was confidential, and the journals were not graded. Punctuation skills, grammar, and sentence structure improved in most cases, the length of sentences and paragraphs improved in all cases. Ninety percent of the students indicated a positive feeling about writing, and a majority reported that they enjoyed sharing reading and writing with their classmates. Difficulties in using this teaching technique included the amount of teacher time spent in answering the journals on a daily basis, and the problem of motivating students to write. Overall, results indicated that the dialogue journals were successful in combining the need for a culture-based learning style which emphasized group cooperation, and pragmatic learning based on experiences. (Examples of pre-writing, a student attitude chart, a student progress chart, and 22 references are appended.) (MM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED292118

Dialogue Journals: Facilitating the Reading-Writing Connection with Native American Students

by
Mary S. Dooley

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION AT NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN

January, 1987

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mary S. Dooley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CS211055

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ACQUIRING READING AND WRITING SKILLS
Sequence for Acquiring Language 1
Function of Reading and Writing 3
Integration of Reading and Writing 4
Theories of Early Writing 5
Teaching Writing Before Reading 6

II DIALOGUE JOURNALS

Description 8
Research 10

III. LEARNING STYLES OF NATIVE AMERICANS

Theories 11
Indian Cultural Values 14

IV. SUBJECTS AND SETTING

Description of Subjects 14
Description of School 15

V. METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH, ANALYSIS

Rules 18
Student Entries 19
Interpretation of Results 25
Problems 25

BIBLIOGRAPHY 27

APPENDIX A 29

Examples of Pre-Writing 30

APPENDIX B 31

Student Attitude Chart 32

APPENDIX C 33

Student Progress Chart 34

A central issue in the study of literacy is the relationship between writing and reading. That relationship can best be understood by considering the nature of reading and writing, how they are learned, and what their functions are. This paper will discuss what recent research tells us about the need to integrate early writing and reading; and how the instructional use of Dialogue Journals provided a class of Native American students with natural, functional experiences in both reading and writing.

I. Acquiring Reading and Writing Skills

The usual sequence for acquiring language is generally thought to be: listening, speaking, reading, and writing with the receptive skills preceding the expressive ones (Hall, Moretz, and Statom, 1976). Emig (1977) refers to the first-order and second--order processes. First-order processes being speaking and listening which children develop naturally with little or no formal instruction; and second-order being reading and writing which usually are acquired with instruction. One common assumption about the second-order processes is that writing is an outgrowth of reading, so reading must be learned before writing can begin. Yet considerable evidence suggests that this sequence is not necessary, and perhaps not even desirable (Wilson, 1981).

Research over the past 20 years supports the view that the first-order process of speech is learned by internalization of rules by which the child tests certain hypotheses, modifies them, and repeats them. The procedure starts through exposure to language in natural situations in which the child recognizes the communicative nature of speech (Smith, 1979). Smith believes the second-order process of reading is also developed by the testing of hypotheses and by producing feedback. It is Smith's opinion that learning to read is much the same as learning a spoken language.

Just as reading and oral language should develop naturally when opportunities in natural contexts and situations exist, the same procedures may also apply to writing development (Falk, 1979). Falk suggests that writing must also be learned through internalization of patterns and principles acquired through extensive exposure to print and practical experiences with the written language. The value of experience-based reading and writing is likewise stressed by Britton (1970) who questions why teachers use rigged or stage-managed situations, when in fact children bring with them to school a wealth of experience. Britton believes that everytime a child succeeds in reading or writing about something that has happened to him, or something he has been thinking, he has interpreted, shaped, and coped with some part of his life. In other words, in Britton's view, both

reading and writing are learned, not taught.

Studies of early development of reading and writing consistently show that pre-schoolers are aware that meaning is the ultimate function of both writing and reading. Harste, Burke, and Woodward (1979) argue that meaning is the only functional purpose for the development of language. Their research indicates that pre-schoolers already know a great deal about written language before receiving formal instruction. This was documented in a study of young children who were asked to write their names and everything else they could. Dawn, age 4, began by writing some alphabet letters in the first line. She soon abandoned this and began to make numerous left-to-right scribbles down the page (Appendix A). When asked to read it she read, "My name is Dawn. I go to University School. I used to go to Children's Corner. My brother Timmy goes to University School, too." (p.19). Her scribbles strongly resemble cursive English writing. Moreover, she demonstrated that she understood language was to convey a message when she abandoned her drawing of meaningless alphabet letters in favor of a more meaningful message. The researchers concluded that, contrary to popular opinion, scribble writing may represent a later rather than earlier state of writing. In another study, Harste and Carey (1979) asked three and four year olds with foreign language backgrounds to write anything they knew how to write (Appendix A). Their writing clearly demonstrates the children's expectancies not only for the function but for

the form of print growing out of the natural encounters with print in their early environments. The children from Egyptian and Arabian backgrounds exhibit writing resembling their Middle Eastern cultures. These studies lend support to the hypothesis that comprehension is a setting for written language development rather than a result of it. The data suggest that written language, like oral language, is learned and one encounter builds upon the other. Through writing, youngsters also develop reading skills. Reading and writing are clearly developmentally interrelated, and should be learned as such (Wilson, 1981).

Whichever second-order language process is presented in a classroom, it is clear that both reading and writing influence each other and that both develop as the child needs to communicate. Applebee (1975) reports the positive influence of one on the other, and states that the correlations among various language skills stem from their mutual dependence upon syntactic maturity and that reading and writing experiences tend to improve each other. Reading and writing are integrated and supportive processes - not isolated skills to be practiced, dissected,and analyzed in artificial settings. Traditional teaching methods have, however, often focused on specific skills such as phonics, study skills, handwriting, paragraph form, etc. In 1978, Donald Graves suggested that the problems students have with reading and writing were easily understood if one were to look at the way these subjects are frequently taught. Writing instruction

usually consists of workbook exercises, drills in penmanship, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc. Graves surmised that the problem with writing is that there is very little actual writing in many classrooms beyond short or incomplete sentences, and circling answers.

Reading instruction often fares no better. More time is spent on workbook and skills and drills than on actual reading. Teachers express concern that if they are not teaching directly to the skill, students will not learn. In fact, Yetta Goodman of the University of Arizona (1980) has suggested that if we taught oral language the way we do reading, we would have as many students enrolled in remedial speaking classes as we do in remedial reading. Other research suggests that reading and writing best complement each other when taught simultaneously (Chomsky, 1971; Clay, 1975; Harste, Burke, and Woodward, 1979).

Evidence suggests that for young children to read well, they also must write. Pablo Friere (1970) proposed that children's minds are far from linguistic empty spaces into which reading information can be poured. He suggests children be permitted to be active participants in teaching themselves to read. By reversing the usual order of reading first and writing later, this can be allowed to happen. The common assumption that writing should follow reading was also challenged by researcher-Carol Chomsky (1971) who argues that children are developmentally ready to write before they read, and that their introduction to

print should be through writing. The composing of words according to sounds is the first step toward reading. Word recognition appears so much more difficult for children than composing words. So, Chomsky wonders, why do our traditional reading programs usually demand children to deal with word recognition first? To expect a child to read as a first step what someone else has written is backwards. It is an artificial imposition that denies the child an active role in the whole process.

Writing before reading is not a new idea. In the early 1900's, Maria Montessori (1967) utilized a similar method working with orphans and lower class children in her Casa dei Bambini in Rome:

> As soon as the child knows some of the vowels and the consonants we place before him the big box containing all the letters he knows. The directress pronounces very clearly a word; for example "mama," saying the sound of the letter "m" very distinctly a number of times. Almost always the little one seizes an "m" from the box and places it on the table. The child then finds an "a" and places it near the "m", and composes the next syllable. But the reading of the word which he has composed is not so easy. I help the child, urging him to read, and reading the word with him, always pronouncing very distinctly, "mama, mama". Once he has understood the mechanism of the game, the child goes forward by himself, composing the new word, placing one after the other, the signs corresponding to the sounds.

Before World War I, John Henry Martin, educator and developer of the recent IBM Writing to Read program, used a slate and chalk board approach believing that the human hands are the entry points into a child's brain (Hechinger, 1982). Dr. Martin observed that it is necessary for children to realize that they

can, in effect, talk with their fingers on paper (Asbell,1984). Similarly, Sylvia Ashton Warner of New Zealand taught literacy some years ago to aboriginal tribes of Maori by teaching small children to write words and stories that each spontaneously spoke, and then teaching them to read. Donald Durell, a pioneer in the reading field and authority for over 50 years once noted that writing is active, and that often teachers make learning too passive. Durrell is of the opinion that we have known for years the child's first urge is to write, not read, and rarely have schools taken advantage of this fact (Graves, 1978). Marie Clay (1975), too, questions the traditional assumption of sequencing reading instruction before writing, and argues that a creative writing program is the necessary complement to the reading program, especially if they both emphasize meaning. More recently, in 1984, the National Institute of Education in its report, "Becoming a Nation of Readers" emphasizes the importance of integrating the reading, writing, speaking processes. It stresses the need for early writing opportunities for students to apply their knowledge of letter-sound correlations. The report states that early writing should be one of the initial steps in the reading process.

The research is clear: when children have opportunities to write early, experiment with sounds and symbols, are allowed freedom to "try on" different spellings and other aspects of writing, they will develop confidence and fluency in both their

writing and reading. When writing is neglected, reading suffers because neglect of children's experience in writing limits their understanding from reading (Graves, 1978). Writing contributes strongly to reading comprehension. So why, then, do children not write more before they read? Graves believes it is because they have so few role models for writing. They are not likely to see parents or teachers doing much writing. The adults say they have no time, they don't know how, or it is not necessary to write in order to teach writing . Writing is a form of discipline often turned into a form of punishment, "Write 100 times I will not chew gum in school" is a perfect example. Little wonder that writing skills are often taught as an afterthought.

II. Dialogue Journals

Many researchers believe that Dialogue Journals solve much of the need for the integration of early writing and reading (Schwartz, 1984). They allow reading and writing to be taught simultaneously as Chomsky proposed (1971), and provide the exposure to and practical experience with the use of language in actual, natural contexts and situations that Clay (1975) and others advocated. The dialogue journal is an instructional technique which has emerged as an extension of the journal writing that has been used in classrooms for many years. In a traditional journal, however, student diary entries are generally

corrected by the teacher and criticism, constructive though it may be, usually will occur. Fluency and expressive writing are often sacrificed in the process (Davis, 1983). The dialogue journal, however, requires a non- evaluative response from the teacher. Topics are drawn from the first hand experiences of the students and from the context of their daily lives. Davis further suggests that the interaction of this communication between student and teacher helps young people begin to develop a continuity of purpose in their writing.

A dialogue journal is a bound notebook in which students write regularly, as much as they wish, about anything they wish. The teacher responds to each student entry. They, in effect, carry on a conversation in writing. For some students, journals are a reflection of life, or a recording of events. Others find them a channel to write fantasy, jokes, ask questions, or make complaints. Dialogue journals are a relaxed, ungraded, non-pressured activity which takes into account the entire writing and reading process.

Dialogue journals, have three significant features. First students are allowed to write whatever is relevant to them, from their own experiences. The teacher questions, encourages, comments, and provides the child with a response, usually daily, to what has been written. As children read the responses, they must understand and integrate information, and construct a

response from themselves to the teacher. In other words, they discover what it means to communicate to an audience. The third, and unique, feature of dialogue journals as used in this particular study include the use of journals in cooperative learning groups in which students choose their own partners to write, share, and read what they have written and what the teacher writes back to them.

The identification of dialogue journal writing as a form of discourse comes from Staton and Shuy's work (1982) at the Center for Applied Linguistics with teachers from around the country. Staton credits much of the idea for written interaction to a 6th grade teacher on the West Coast who used the method to stave off teacher burn-out. Students wrote to her each day during class time, and she responded on a one-to-one basis.

Staton and Shuy report that students wrote on a regular basis and the teacher modeled correct grammar, sentence construction, or spelling rather than evaluating students' writing. Understanding developed between participants in which human experiences were used to acquire knowledge. Staton, Shuy and Kreeft documented another study of dialogue journals used in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom with students in Los Angeles. These students had been in the U.S. less than one year and had emigrated from Korea, Viet Nam, Burma, and Italy. The researchers noted similar success of dialogue journals used as an

important classroom management tool, an aid to lesson planning, individual instruction, and a valuable source of information about the students' cultures and needs. An adaptation of the dialogue journal method was made by New Jersey Project as part of a migrant education project by the U.S. Department of Education under Title I. The project was used with migrant junior and senior high school students. Project coordinators discovered students using dialogue journals became more fluent in English, and developed closer personal ties with the teacher without exposing themselves to peer pressure (Davis, 1983).

III. Learning Styles of Native Americans

In 1985, the Northwest Regional Educational Labora- tory for Research and Development in Indian Education issued a publication on "Effective Practices in Indian Education" that discussed at length why Indian students frequently fail in school. The report stresses that Indian students often view their school work as not pertaining to their interests and needs. Feelings of frustration are intensified especially if students have difficulty under-standing the material. Indian youngsters may become bored and and resentful as they struggle to learn material that seems unrelated to their lives. When this occurs, students learn very little and retention is limited.
The report went on to emphasize that all people of all cultures

have behavioral learning styles which are a combination of individual responses and social conditioning from their homes and cultures. Likewise, the Indian learner is affected by his culture, environment, values, parental and peer pressures. There is, however, no "absolute" Indian learning style and there is a danger in stereotyping. However typically, Indian children learn best from a community learning style in which the child observes carefully over a long period of time, followed by a practice of the process (direct experience), with a minimum of verbal interchange. They are group-oriented and prefer to work in teams or small groups (Watt, 1978).

Similar research by Johnson, Johnson, Holubac, and Roy, 1984) shows that cooperative learning groups tend to promote higher achievement than do individualistic and competitive learning. Results indicate this hold true for all ages, levels, and subject areas. In cooperative learning groups, there is peer feedback, academic and emotional support. The feelings that students develop for each other increase their motivation to learn and increases their encouragement of each other to achieve.

A section on cooperative learning groups in the above mentioned report by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (pp. 51-52) advocates these learning groups for Native American students. The report states that since Indian cultures place high value on cooperation, classroom tasks involving cooperative

learning should be well suited to Indian children. It stresses positive interdependence among group members, with clear individual accountability. It urges student assessment in mastery of content with each student being given feedback. The group is then given feedback on how each member is progressing, therefore members know who to help and encourage. Groups should be heterogeneous in ability, and social skills should be taught such as leadership, trust, communication, and managing conflicts.

An article by John Downing in the Journal of Educational Research in 1977 identifies "cognitive confusion" as interfering with beginning Indian readers. Some Indian children do not seem to understand why certain successions of printed letters should correspond to phonetic sounds in words. Sometimes their concepts of the communicative functions of writing are unclear and they may not understand the purpose of reading. Downing suggested further that Indian students learn faster when the teaching style uses the concrete approach and moves then to the abstract - from practice to theory. Most schools follow the European-American model from theory to practice. The best learning and study approach, he believes, for most Native American children is "see and do", or observe and imitate with practical application of skills.

Joan Webkamicud of the Michigan Department of Indian Education, in a presentation in 1984, cited several cultural

differences between Indians and Non-Indians that relate to academic learning. Some significant ones include:

Indian Values	Non-Indian Values
group/clan emphasis	individual emphasis
present oriented	future oriented
age revered	youth glorified
cooperative	competetive
pragmatic	theoretical
modest, shy	over confident
silent	noisy, talkative
low self-value	high self esteem

IV. Subjects and Setting

The idea of keeping a daily classroom dialogue was first introduced to my classroom of 10 third grade students in July, 1986. All of the students are Native American children living on an Indian reservation in northern Michigan. Residing in a rural, isolated community of about 400 people, these children are second generation speakers of English. Their grandparents grew up speaking the native language and following the native customs, but for one reason or another were unable to continue their traditional ways for the last 40 years or so. Virtually every

tribal member speaks English now, but with a dialect reflecting the native tongue, and with generally poor grammar and syntax. Many of the students' parents are intelligent but have not completed high school. The community is highly matriarchal, with few male role models, other than those affiliated in some way with the school. A high percentage of the students' parents, especially mothers, are employed in various capacities on the Reservation.

The school, the only one of its kind in Michigan, was begun with Bicentennial Year funds in 1976 and is operated on a year round basis of 10 weeks of school, followed by 3 weeks of vacation, for a total of 200 days a year. School terms correspond to the cycles of the moon, an important Indian concept. The school had been the idea of a few parents, started in part due to a dissatisfaction with the Indian student dropout rate of 89% at the nearby public school,and partly due to a concern that traditional values and culture were being forgotten.

The school handbook states the that traditional values of the Indian community are the foundation of the entire school. Over the past 10 years, the school has been quite successful in keeping sight of its cultural philosophy. Each child spends one hour a day, studying Indian culture and the native language. Self esteem, pride in their heiritage, and good attendance are evident today. And yet, academically, particularly in reading and

language skills, test scores have been consistently averaging one to two years below national norms, as determined by the Metropolitan Achievement Test, and the California Achievement Test. Students enrolling in pre-school classes at age 4, are generally 1.3 to 2.2 years behind in speech and language development and many seem never to catch up. Two years ago, a Head Start program was begun to allleviate this situation. All students in K-2 have routinely been placed in Chapter I classes as a preventtative measure. Out of a population of 74 students in grades k-8, 24 qualify for remedial speech and language classes, and 21 have been determined learning disabled or emotionally impaired by the local Intermediate School District.

Dialogue journals seem to be an excellent instructional technique to combine the need for a cultural-based learning style which emphasizes group cooperation, and pragmatic learning based on experiences. It appeals to the modest, shy nature of many Native American children who frequently are less skilled in verbal communication, and who need to develop improved self-esteem through encouragement and praise, particularly on a one-to-one basis from an adult role model, using patterns of standardized English.

The structure of the journal program had to encourage honest, experience-based writing which would foster self-awareness on the part of students and teacher. It would be based on

the following objectives:

IV. Objectives

(1) To provide a non-threatening writing situation in which students feel free to express themselves honestly, and write things of immediate concern to them

(2) To provide the teacher, as journal-reader, with a daily record of student mastery of composition skills, spelling, grammar rules, etc., which may be useful in planning relevant learning actities.

(3) To provide the students with daily opportunities to model correct usage, spelling, grammar, composition skills, etc.

(4) To serve as a medium of free exchange of ideas and feelings between teacher and student, developing a sense of mutual trust

(5) To provide opportunities in the classroom for cooperative learning, whereby students have the daily opportunities to share their reading and writing and to tutor each other

V. Methodology, Results, and Analysis

The following rules were established to ensure the objectives be met:

Rules:

(1) Everyone is required to make an entry every day of at least three lines

(2) Journals are personal property and may be shared by other students only with permission

(3) Nothing written in the journal will be held against the writer; there will be strict confidentiality

(4) Journals will not be graded

Reading the children's journals helped me better understand them better: their language, their home lives, their needs both in and out of school, and even their cultural heiritage. Through their writings, I was able to enter their very unique worlds, observe, and come away with a special feeling of closeness. It enabled me to empathize with their problems, both personal and academic. I tried to make my responses personal and genuine and to share myself with them as they were sharing themselves with me. I came to realize that just because these children live in an isolated, insulated world, they don't lack experiences. Just because they come from a long history of limited verbal communication, does not mean they don't think, or cannot communicate.

The following entries provide the reader with a sample of the trust and sharing of oneself that Dialogue Journals provided me and my students: They also demonstrate the use of teacher modeling correct spelling, punctuation, and usage.

Richard, July 10

"My dad wus jrunk last night i get scard wen he is jrunk.
I wis he wood go for trtment."

Teacher's response, July 10

"My friend's dad used to drink, too. My friend would go outside and hide until his dad went to sleep. I hope your dad will go for treatment. It would help."

Stephen, July 8

"I'm nervis to day new room but I got to get yoos to it. it's a nice room I'm hapy

Teacher's response, July 9

"It's alright to feel nervous on your first day in a new room. In time you will get used to it and you won't be so nervous. I'm glad you're happy. I'm glad to be back, also.

Stephen, July 10

"yesterday it was my bothers berthday. we diden't have a big party thoe. we don't have that cinde of mony. my dad likes police work. it's just that they don't pay him a nuf muny. we cant even by a deesent house for us to live in.

Teacher's response, July 10

"Tell your brother I said Happy Birthday! I'm sorry you feel bad about your house. Maybe things will get better soon. Keep your chin up!

About one month after the initiation of the Dialogue Journal writing program, a two-part method of teaching spelling was introduced: (1) Students should circle any word of whose spelling they were unsure. The teacher would help them spell it correctly the same day if possible, or in the written response.

(2) When the teacher noticed a word spelled incorrectly, it would be noted in the margin. The child should then correct the error, and write the word in the Word Bank section of his/her notebook.

Here is an example of using journal writing to teach correct spelling:

Tyrone, August 19

today my horrese got out and we had to cech them. and by the way they wonte kick you inles you get them mad.

Teacher's response, August 20

I hope you can catch your horse. Please write me tomorrow and tell me if you did. Here are some words you will need to know how to spell:

horse catch won't unless

Eventually, this form of correction was applied to punctuation errors, with periods and commas put in the margins opposite lines with error. At other times, actual instructions for skills to work on were included in the teacher's response. The following are examples of using the teacher journal entries to teach:

Teacher's response to Jamie, July 25

I had trouble reading what you wrote today. Please try to remember to put in periods at the ends of your sentences. It would help a lot.

Teacher's response to Carmen, August 21

I am glad you spelled "might" correctly today. Tomorrow please try to put a capital letter at the beginning of each sentence, and leave one finger space betweeen each word. OK?

In addition to the free writing done by these students in their Dialogue Journals, another form of writing known as "controlled writing" was introduced into the classroom about 4 months into the project. Controlled writing centers around the

sentences the teacher dictates for the students to write. The length and number of the sentences can vary. The sentences include student's spelling or vocabulary words, or words from experiences the children have had. After each sentence is written by the students, the teacher writes it correctly on the chalkboard for the students to compare with theirs. This provides for immediate feedback as to their success at writing, correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, etc.

This method, along with the free writing of the journals, has proven quite successful. Students have made significant gains in the numbers of words, sentences, and paragraphs written each day since the beginning of the program. There are still spelling errors, but the difficulty of the words used by the students has increased. Punctuation errors have been considerably reduced. (Appendix B)

The following are examples of the growth individual students have made as far as quantity of daily entries:

Carmen, July 8

I went to the Park Me and mindy.

Carmen, October 27

Hi how are you fin I hope well today I mit go to town or I

might go to town on Wededay. I saw a colown I might be or a Punk Rocker to and I'm haveing my hair up or down Wat are you going to be a clow or a ninja. well by so long I like you for a ticher

(Still a long way to go with spelling and punctuation skills, but paragraph length increased from 8 words to 56.)

Carmen, Nov. 18

Hi how are you I got thos Blisters from rollersaking. Today is Jamie Brthday. And I am going rollersaking. wate are we going to do on Monday what are we going to be for the Christmass play do you know what we are going to be Your friend Carmen (45 words)

Nicole, July 8

I wint swime in the woty (Translated: "I went swimming in the water." 6 words)

Nicole, October 24

I am going to be a witch and I am going to have fun and I am going to have mackup on. and I get to have long feegernels. win my sister get's biger she will have fun too win my mom was little I Bet she had fun and my dad too on Halloween it will be scary I wunder if it will be spooky sume pepol can be witchis (74 words)

Nicole, November 7

The movie about Willy Woka and the choclat factry was good Veronka Solt was funny win she fell in the garbige and Peter was up in the air and Grapa Joe wint up in the air to. it was funny but it wasint funny whin they wint to hih up. But it was good You shood of seen it did you like the Opalopa peple in the movie They wer funny Thack you for letting us woch it. it was rilly good love Nicole

(76 words. Many errors but improved organization of ideas. Capitalization of names generally correct.)

Mike, July 8

i wint swiming. (3 words)

Mike, October 8

One day I saw Tyrannosaurus rex. I was afrad. He was very Mad looking he was mad at me Because. I was throwing rocks at him and startid to run after me. I ran faster every minute he had a hundred teeth. Then i fond a Bow and arow. And then I shot him He did'nt die and he took me to his cave it had spiders in it and snakes and Bones of animals he was eating then King kong came a long and was Beating him up and then was throwing him around then I got away the end (90 words)

Mike, November 19, 1986

What was the name of you're other school? What should we do for

Christmas we cod sing a song lets not have a play plays are boaring We should really sing a song I like to sing are we going to have a christmas tree the end Love, Mike your freind Mike

(52 words Still lacks periods at end of sentences but good sentence structure.)

These students have made considerable progress since dialogue journals were introduced five months ago. They enjoy writing to their teacher and are genuinely disappointed when, on rare occasions, they are not written to daily. Punctuation skills, grammar, and sentence structure have improved in most cases. Length of sentences and paragraphs has improved in all instances. Having a daily record of writing level has been a definite aid in planning lessons for the class and for individuals. A sense of mutual trust has developed between teacher and students. 90% indicate a positive feeling about writing and a majority enjoy sharing reading and writing with their classmates (Appendix B).

There are problems, as with all teaching methods. These include a considerable amount of time on the part of the teacher in answering the journals on a daily basis. Difficulties occur from time to time in motivating students to write. This has been partially solved by using the star system for good work and by offering extensive praise for succesful writers. By taking

students on frequent field trips, reading to them each day, bringing in elders to speak about their culture, the students are learning that they do think, feel, and experience. In my opinion, and that of these Native American students and their parents, dialogue journals have been a successful teaching technique. (Appendix C)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Applebee, Arthur. "Writing and Reading." Journal of Reading, April 1972, pp.534-537.

Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading. The National Institute of Education. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1984.

Britton, James. "The Student's Writing." Explorations in Children's Writing. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). 1970.

Chomsky, Carol. "Write First, Read Later." Childhood Education, March 1971, pp. 296-299.

Clay, Marie. What Did I Write? London, England: Heinemann Educational Books, 1975.

Davis, Francis. "Why You Call Me Emigrant? Dialogue Journal Writing with Migrant Youth." Childhood Education, November-December 1983, pp. 110-116.

DeFord, Diane. "Literacy: Reading, Writing, and Other Essentials." Language Arts, September 1981, pp. 652-655.

Downing, John. "Concepts of Language in Children from Differing Socio-Economic Backgrounds." Journal of Educational Research. Washington, D.C.: May-June, 1977, pp. 277-281.

Emig, Janet. "Writing as a Mode of Learning." College Composition and Communication, May 1977, pp. 122-128.

Falk, Julia. "Language Acquistion and the Teaching and Learning of Writing." College English, December 1979, pp. 436-437.

Friere, Pablo. "The Adult Literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom." Harvard Educational Review, May 1970, p. 208.

Goodman, Yetta M. Reading Strategies: Focus on Comprehension. New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1984.

Graves, Donald. "Balance the Basics: Let Them Write." New York: Ford Foundation, 1978.

Hall, Mary Ann, Moretz, Sara, Staton, J. "Writing Before Grade 1: A Study of Early Writers." Language Arts, May 1976, pp. 582-585.

Harste, Jerome, Burke, Carolyn, Woodward, V.A. Children, Language, and the World. Unpublished Manuscript. Indiana

University, Bloomington: March 1979.

Harste, Jerome, Carey, Robert. Comprehension as Setting in New Perspectives on Comprehension: Monographs in Language and Reading Studies. Indiana University, Bloomington: 1979.

Montessori, Maria. The Montessori Method. Cambridge, Mass: Robert Bentley, Inc., 1967.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. "Effective Practices in Indian Education: A Teacher's Monograph." Portland, Oregon: 1985.

Smith, Frank. Understanding Reading. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Wilson, 1978.

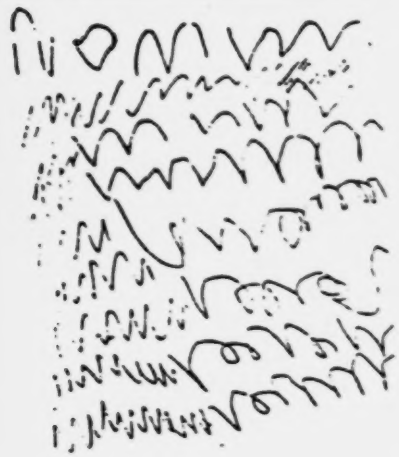
Staton, Jana, Shuy, Roger, Kreeft, Joy. "Dialogue Journal Writing as a Communicative Event." Executive Summary of a Study funded by the National Institute of Education. Writing Research Program. Washington, D.C: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1980-1982.

Webkamicud, Joan. Cultural Differences Between Indians and Non-Indians. Escanaba, Michigan: Michigan Department of Indian Education, 1984.

Wilson, Marilyn. "A Review of Recent Research on the Integration of Reading and Writing." Reading Teacher, May 1981, pp. 896-901.

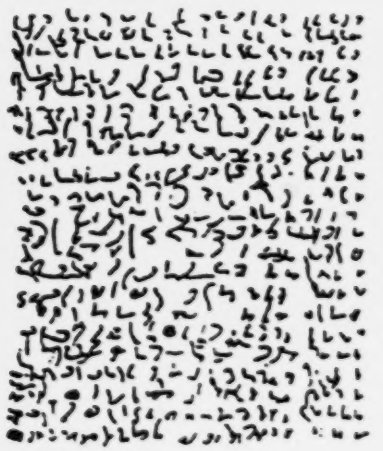
APPENDIX A

Uninterrupted writing samples from three children age 4.



Dawn
United States

Najeeba
Saudi Arabia



Dalia
Egypt

From Harste and Carey, 1979. Reprinted by permission.

something, possibly the *C*, that provides the cue for "Crest" or "Colgate." In either case, we have a clear indication of increasing print awareness.

The researchers also concluded that children begin associating the length of graphic display with the length of sound. Four-year-old Alison was shown a cup from a restaurant chain called Wendy's Hamburgers. Alison responded to the question "What does that say?" by saying "Wendy's" as she ran her finger under *Wendy's* on the cup, but she responded with "cup" as she ran her finger under *Hamburgers*. Then she looked at the experimenter and said, "That's a short sound for a long word" (p. 10). She was puzzled by the incongruity because she was beginning to deal with the relationship between the graphic system and the sound system of language.

Children's writing

Harste, Burke, and Woodward also document the importance of print expectations for both function and form in studies carried out with the writing of preschoolers. Dawn, age 4, when asked to write everything she could, began the writing assignment by forming some letters of the alphabet, but abandoned that in favor of scribble drawing, left-to-right, line-for-line, down the page.

APPENDIX B

AN EVALUATION OF WRITING SKILLS IN JULY-SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER

	Words			Sentences			Spelling Errors			Correct use of Capitals		
	J	S	N	J	S	N	J	S	N	J	S	N
Tonto	15	42	30	2	14	7	1(15)	17(42)	9(30)	4(4)	12(24)	7(11)
Mike	5	62	52	1	12	5	1(5)	7(62)	0(35)	3(3)	1(12)	13(15)
Jamie	25	45	29	5	7	5	8(25)	6(45)	0(29)	1(6)	6(10)	7(9)
Matt	9	38	42	1	6	5	2(8)	0(38)	1(42)	3(4)	4(9)	12(12)
Lisa	--	40	36	--	6	5	--	8(40)	14(36)	--	7(8)	6(12)
Tyrone	8	60	53	1	7	5	2(8)	3(60)	3(53)	3(3)	14(17)	3(3)
Carmen	10	38	45	1	6	9	5(10)	6(38)	7(45)	3(4)	13(14)	12(15)
Steven	22	65	58	4	22	16	3(22)	10(65)	5(58)	4(7)	12(25)	10(10)
Nicole	8	33	76	1	4	12	3(8)	3(33)	19(76)	3(3)	9(11)	12(17)

APPENDIX C

Survey of Attitudes of Student Journal Writers

	Yes	No
1. I feel happy about writing in my journal	9	1
2. I feel happy when my teacher writes to me	9	1
3. I feel happy when I read my journal to a friend	7	3
4. I feel happy when my friend reads to me	8	2
5. I feel happy when I write with a friend	8	2